

Participatory orthography development in Abawiri

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Outline

- Traditional perspectives on orthography development
- Participatory Methods
- Abawiri: a case study
- Evaluation and prospects



Traditional perspectives on orthography development

- Focus on phonological contrasts (e.g. Dawson 1989)
- Emphasis on ease of reading and writing (e.g. Smalley 1959)
- A growing awareness of social factors (Cahill & Karan 2008; Clifton 2016; papers in Cahill & Rice 2014)

But orthographies remain a linguist-centered enterprise (Seifart 2006)

Issues with traditional approaches

- Acceptability (Clifton 2016)
- Ownership (Dobrin 2008 and many others)

An alternative: Participatory Methods

- Emerged in the field of community development (Kumar 2002; Kaner 2007)
- Both an ideological framework

“A participatory approach values community knowledge and local expertise. It invites outsiders to do things *with* rather than *for* community members. It recognizes that if community members are not involved in decision making they will often reject what outsiders do for them by not using innovations.” (Sue Hasselbring)
- and a set of “tools”
 - Gauging interest in language development (Kluge & Choi 2016)
 - Strategic planning (Hanawalt et al 2016)
 - Variation, multilingualism, language attitudes (Truong & Garcez 2012, Ryn Gonzales’s talk yesterday)
 - Literacy (Varghese 2013)
 - Phonological and grammatical analysis (Kutsch Lojenga 1996)
 - Orthography development (Kutsch Lojenga 1996; Easton 2003)

Participatory orthography development

Foundational ideas:

- Speakers know things
 - The language
 - The social system
 - Other writing systems
- Their knowledge is valuable
 - Collective intuitions as a starting point
 - Representative group of community members

Participatory orthography development: 2 implementations

- Participatory research in linguistics (Kutsch Lojenga 1996)
 - Writing words by semantic domain
 - Sorting words by relevant segments and tones
 - Discussing problem areas
- Alphabet Design Workshops (Easton 2003; Easton & Wroge 2012)
 - Writing stories, marking trouble spots
 - Group reading, marking trouble spots
 - Discussing problem areas
 - Repeats iteratively

Abawiri: a case study



Background on the language

Abawiri (also known as Foau)

- Part of the Lakes Plain family
- Speaker population = 400 and growing
- Isolated
- (Lack of) multilingualism
- Positive attitudes and recent surge of interest in language development
- Strong motivation for local ownership of development work



Workshop format

Step 1: Discuss what makes a good writing system

Step 2: Write words for each consonant and vowel

Step 3: Write words by semantic domain

Step 4: Write procedures

Step 5: Assemble a grapheme chart

Step 6: Write stories

Step 1: Discuss what makes a good writing system

- Brief introduction of letter < > sound correspondence
- In other contexts, longer participatory discussions would be required

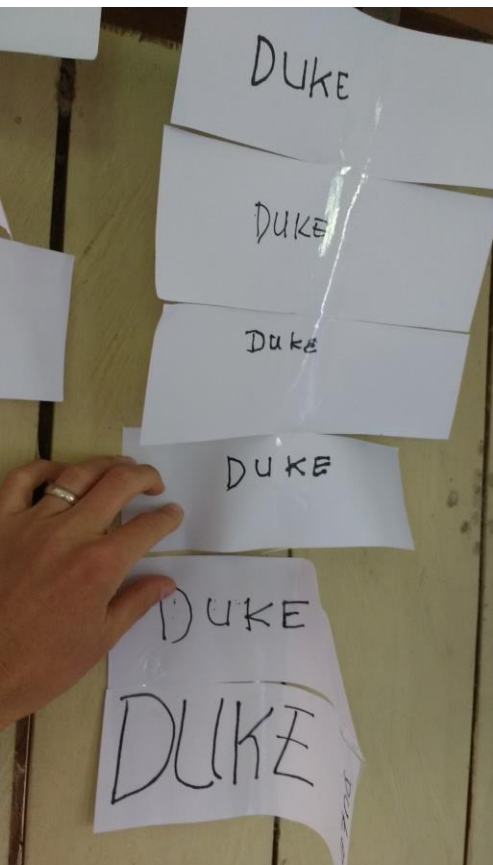
Step 2: Write words for each consonant and vowel

- 6 groups of 4-5 people
- Each group designated a 'scribe'
- All groups wrote a target word for each sound
- Groups' work compared



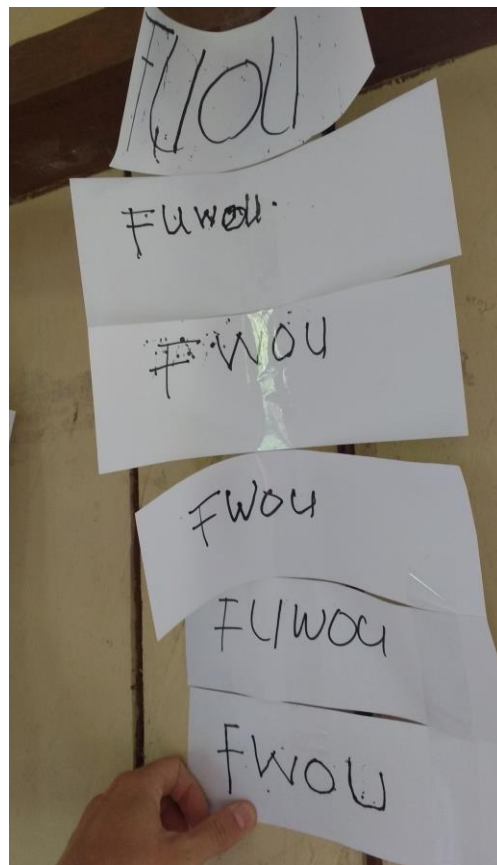
[dúkè] 'bird'

Target segment: /d/



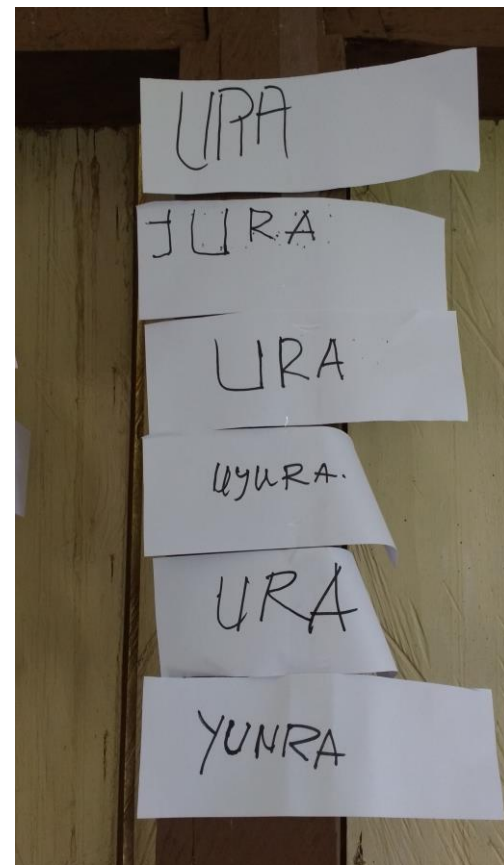
[f^wòu] 'bee'

Target segment: /f^w/



[ýrà] 'fruit'

Target segment: /y/





Results

Labialized consonants

High front vowels

Consonants

	t		k
	t ^w		k ^w
b	d	dʒ	g
b ^w	d ^w	dʒ ^w	g ^w
f	s		
f ^w	s ^w		
	r		

Vowels

i̥		
i	y	u
ε		ɐ
	a	

Options for labialized consonants

- Cw (e.g. <dworu>, <fwou>)
- Cu (e.g. <duoru>, <fuou>)
- Cwu (e.g. <duworu>, <fuwou>)



Options for high front vowels

/y/

- yu (e.g. <yura>, <yudabi>)
- uyu (e.g. <uyura>, <uyudabi>)
- yun (e.g. <yunra>, <yundabi>)
- u (e.g. <ura>, <udabi>)

/i/

- yi (e.g. <tryi>)
- i (e.g. <tri>)

Options for labialized consonants

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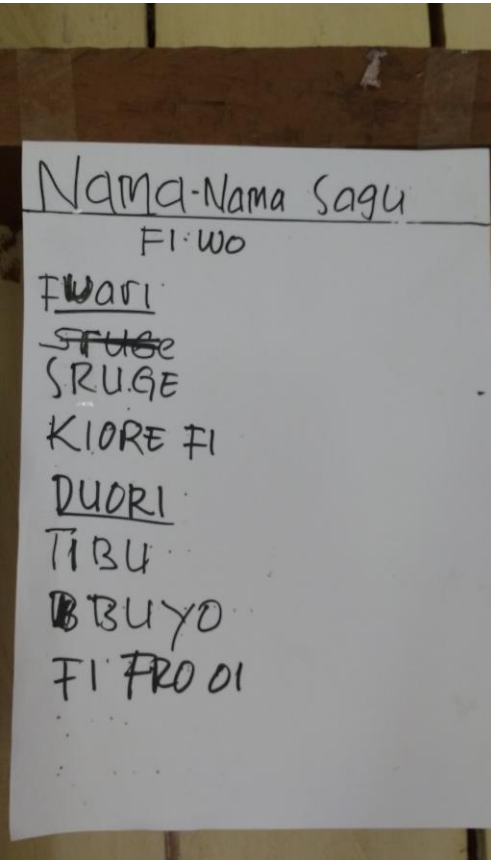
/i/

- yi (e.g. <tryi>)
- i (e.g. <tri>)

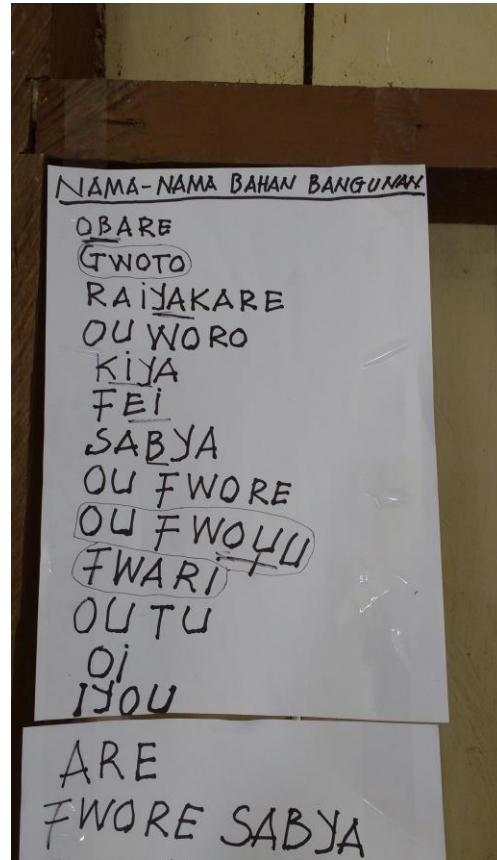
Step 3: Write words by semantic domain



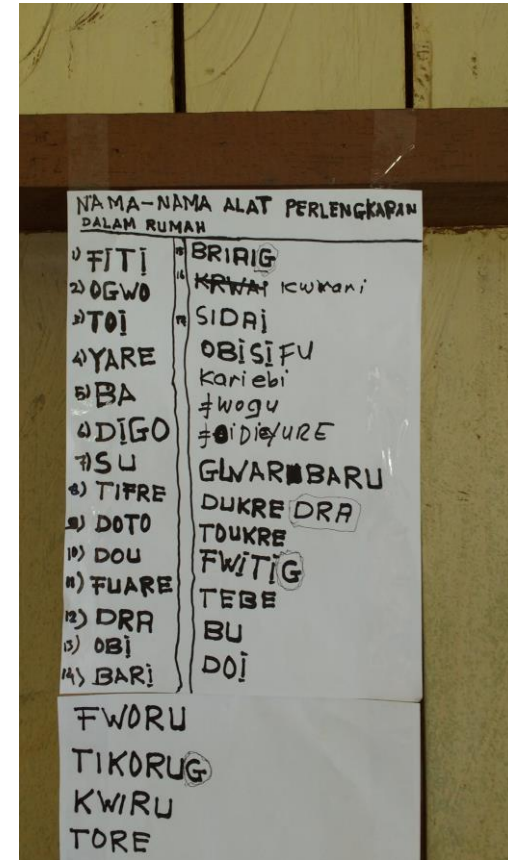
Types of sago



Building materials



Household appliances



Step 3: Write words by semantic domain

Semantic domains for word writing task

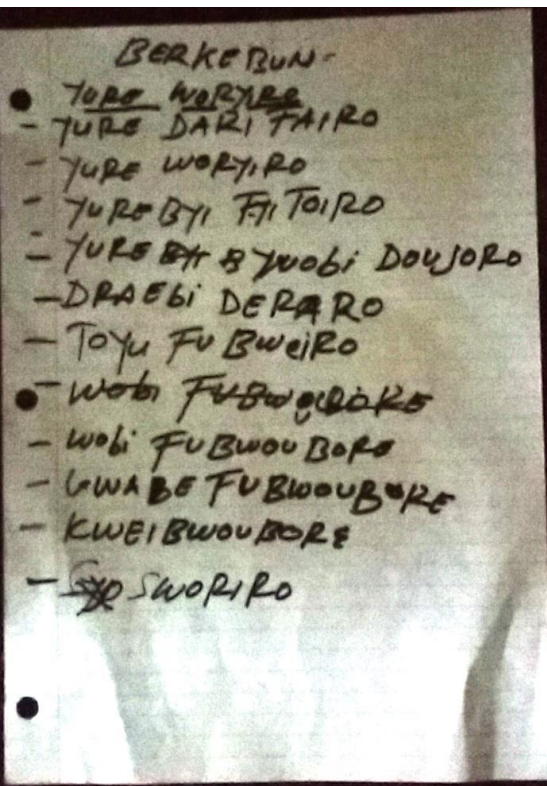
Semantic Domain	Number of words
Types of sago	7
Types of bananas	23
Other edible plants	36
Types of trees	67
Materials for house construction	18
Household supplies	34



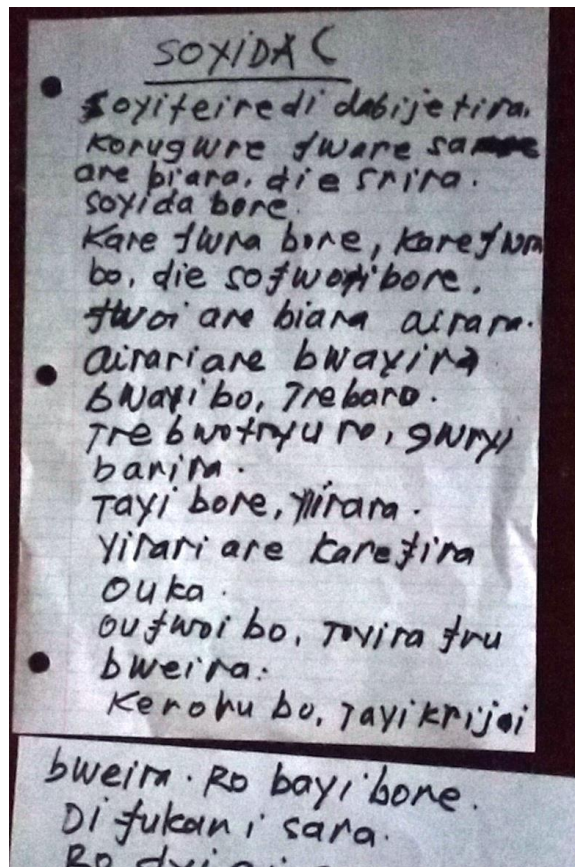
Step 4: Write procedures



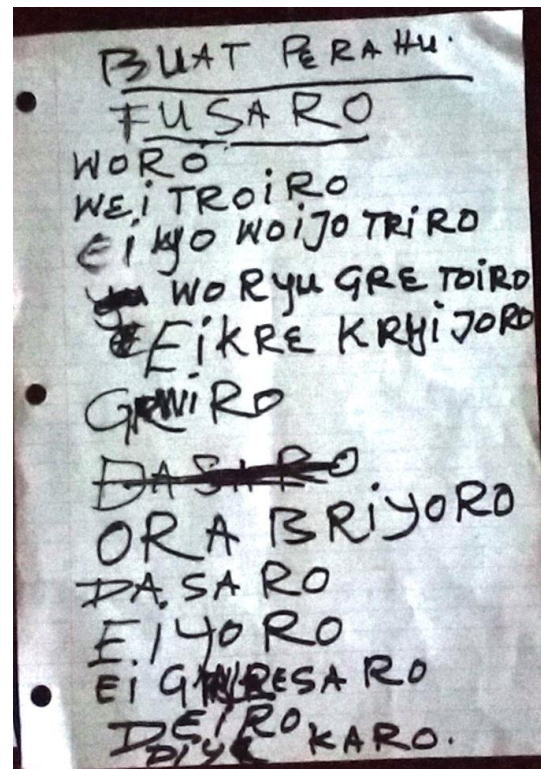
Gardening



Hunting pigs



Building a canoe



Step 5: Assemble a grapheme chart

HURUF - HURUF BAHASA ABAWIKI					
HURUF	KATA	ARTI			
1. a	abu	Nene	13. JW	Jwakore	Maka/Taji
2. b	batua	Labu	14. K	KOU	Tidak baik
3. bw	bwabwai	balas	15. KW	Kweia	hati
4. d	deria	baik	16. O	OU	tumah
5. dw	dwexi	Sda Peremp	17. P	rosi	Chobil Sudak
6. f	fai	Kembali	18. S	so	babi
7. fw	fwai	Mulai	19. SW	sworiro	akan Petuk
8. g	gwakore	kulit	20. t	troto	telu
9. gw	glwakore	siang	21. tw	tweiro	akan gesen
10. i	ire	Kebun	22. U	ubiani	Apq
11. yi	txi	bele asli	23. y	yure	pohon/kayu
12. J	Jeri	pohon Matoa	24. W	wei	gigi
			25. Y	yabrei	bibir/Mulut

Step 6: Write stories



When Dyiabi almost drowned

DYABI TREDIARU DABIGUA.

GUARI BIA, EDXI RAREFU BORE
DUREI, KWORYU, BOSI FU BARYI
ARE BERUE DYTAI TA ANJEI GWRE
BAI FUD TAUWE.
FYIJETA WOUWOU. FYIJETA WOU
BO FERO GWXITE.

GWOKARE FWYI OU FAUWE, E FU
TARE FYIYE. DEBI KESTI BIA WOU
BARE DYIABI.

FU WOBREI BWORYU FUE, BETA
DIE BIANTEUE, BO TUO TREDIARUE

ORU BIA WU BORE KWORYU, WOU ARYU
FU WOBREI KERO BU ADUUE, BINTI
BEGI, FOU ARYU ABACU BORE
WODIKRE KESTI BUOTA TAU.

FERO KWORYU GI WODIKRE GI
TOUE, FU BEITE RO DIE TUORE
JWERORUE.

WU AI RO BEDUE, BADEBI BARE
GWXITE BATE TOUE.

DEBI WU BARE DYIABI

ICEBORE.

Killing a snake

ADU TIKORU FITIBEJE OREBERUE
SYUBERE TORE GWRE BRA TIKORU DIE
KARE KARIOREBERUE WOU BWORUFUE
FWEYI FYIREDI FROUBO BE TIE TOIE P
TORIRI RO KEJE GWRE OREBERUE FITIBEJE
RO TOTROUE EYIGWRE FWOROU FWOUBO RO
FRARE GI GWARUE ADU YRABORUE ABEJE
FRARE GI BIERUE BWOU ALLAH FU

The widow of Nain

CERITA JANDA NAIN

GWARI BIO YESUS DABREI ~~DIYI~~ ~~DIYI~~ ~~DIYI~~
WORIO EREWARI DIYI ~~DIYI~~ DYUROU
ORO - IKARE DOBUDOU BEGI EYIKIRO
RUBO BYARIYI BEGETOU BERE DYI
DYURUBO NAIYI IYIKARE TA DYITRE
TOTROUE YESUS BO OKRA BEGI
ARU ABRE OREBERUE ATREI GREBOE
YESUS FERO DEBI TRE GWA KIX RORU
RO DEBI TRE AJE DABI TA DURO DYI
TREBARU EYI TA UTAI - ORORUBO
DEYI DUZBU BYI UTAIORE BERUE
KWUO FYAI OREBERUE YUTAIOR
FWOJEDABYI BERE ORORUBO DYI
DYURUBO TORE DYI JERUE
FERO ALLAH WYAFU BOBERE
ORUBO IKARE FUKARI DUORE
FUDUBO ATRE BOUBERE



Evaluation and prospects

- Outcomes
 - Tapped into and strengthened local ownership
 - Community made all decisions
 - Linguistically sound
 - Positive initial experiences in reading and writing
- Follow-up
 - Necessarily just the first step in an ongoing and iterative process (Karan 2006)
 - Revisiting issues already covered
 - Discuss and practice conventions for word breaks, punctuation, tone
 - Increasingly meaningful/useful reading and writing tasks

Evaluation and prospects

- Issues
 - Not all stakeholders present
 - Constant pressure for linguist to take over
 - Long time gap between first and subsequent workshops
 - No sustainable structure (yet) for ongoing development

Huruf - Huruf Bahasa Abawizi					
HURUF	KATA	ARTI			
1. a	abu	Nene	13. JW	Jwakare	Hati/Rajin
2. b	batua	Labu	14. K	Kou	Tidak baik
3. bw	bwabwai	balas	15. KW	Kweia	Hati
	deria	baik	16. O	Ou	Rumah
4. d			17. R	rosi	Antri/Sudah
5. dw	dwexi	Sdr Peremp	18. S	so	babi
	fai	Kembali	19. SW	sworiro	akan Petik
6. f	Fwai	Mulai	20. t	troto	tebu
7. fw	fwekare	Kulit	21. tw	tweiro	akan gesen
8. g	g	Siang	22. U	ubiani	Apa
9. gw	glwakare	Kebun	23. Yu	yure	pohon/kayu
10. i	ire	tele as	24. yu	yui	gigi
11. yi	tryi	pona H	25. y		bibir/Nat
12. J	Jeru				

Thank you

MER
HAPPY

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